

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)

WISE COUNTY/TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP WATER SHORTAGE

SITUATION REPORT # 3

1300 Hours October 10, 2005

WEATHER

Forecast:

Mostly cloudy across the state today with high temperatures in the low 70's. Winds will be variable at 5-10 mph. There is a 40-60% chance of precipitation across the state. Projections for Southwest Virginia are lower at 15-30%.

The Flood Warning issued for the Roanoke River at Randolph in Charlotte County and for the Dan River at South Boston in Halifax County has expired.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

EOC Activation:

The Virginia VEOC is at Increased Readiness condition and augmented with additional staffing.

State of Emergency:

On October 7, 2005, Governor Mark R. Warner declared a state of emergency to exist for Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to assist these localities in responding to a critical water shortage. Governor Warner directed appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of the state government to respond to needs in Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to alleviate adverse conditions created by the water shortage.

The Governor directed limited activation of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) to coordinate the provision of assistance to the impacted localities. The Governor also directed that the Virginia National Guard be called forth to state duty to assist in providing such aid. Governor Warner authorized the Departments of State Police, Transportation, and Motor Vehicles to grant temporary overweight, over width, registration, or license exemptions to all carriers transporting essential commodities in and through any area of the Commonwealth in order to support the emergency conditions, regardless of their point of origin or destination.

Local Situation:

Water levels are at a critical low in the Town of Big Stone Gap. Personnel report the Town of Big Stone Gap received an insignificant amount of rainfall over the last 24-hour period. National Weather Service projections indicate short and long-term outlook is not favorable to conditions which would re-charge water supplies.

Local EOC Activations: None

Local Emergency Declared: Wise County declared a local emergency on September 26, 2005.

Evacuations: None

Schools Closed: None

OPERATIONS SECTIONS

State Warning Point:

Receive and disseminate information from Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap. Monitoring weather conditions across the Commonwealth.

STATE AGENCIES

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

VDEM Hazardous Materials Officer coordinating with Wise County, the Town of Big Stone Gap, and state/local agencies to assist with identifying needed resources and developing plan of action. VDEM Local Support Services Division Director will deploy to Wise County on Monday, October 10 to provide additional support.

The Public Affairs Division is working on a combined media campaign to alert the community of the need to conserve water. VDEM Legislative Liaison is providing information to local General Assembly members representing the locality.

VEOC is coordinating requests for assistance from the locality and state agencies and compiling a list of available resources. VEOC is polling communities throughout Southwest Virginia to anticipate long-term drought conditions. VEOC is facilitating conference calls with the locality and state agencies and will serve as the receiving agent for actual and anticipated state agency expenses.

Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

Office of Drinking Water Programs is working with local and state officials to identify and utilize alternate water supply sources. VDH is evaluating alternative sources of non-potable water for sanitary purposes, so that potable water can be reserved for consumption. VDH will test and assist with sanitation of new water line installation from Norton to Big Stone Gap to include issuance of a boil water notice until such time as test results are completed and any needed corrections made. A similar notice and effort applies to the utilization of water resources being drawn from the Powell River and provided by the VNG.

VDH is working as mediation/liaison between various entities to keep communication lines open and the public informed. Efforts include updated water conservation PSA's issued through the faith based institutions yesterday. This outreach effort includes identifying potential shelter sites and at risk persons.

VDH will work with food vendor sites set up at Mountain Empire Community College during the Fall Festival to ensure sanitation of facilities and employee health. Contacts to approximately 30 permitted food establishments such as schools to determine their capability to stay open and under what circumstances have begun. This effort must be coordinated with the Department of Agriculture, which oversees other food vendors

Virginia Department of Mental Health (VDMH)

Working with the Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VAVOAD) and other agencies to identify possible special needs in the community. Group Home operators have been contacted and advised to begin considering relocation alternatives.

Virginia National Guard (VNG)

Virginia National Guard is to perform 3-day time missions utilizing not more than 60 guardsmen:

- Deliver and set up 20,000 gallon bladders at 6 locations as determined by the Town of Big Stone Gap. Bladders and 25 Guardsmen are scheduled to leave Staunton at 1400 hours today. A 2-person team advance team is scheduled to arrive at 1600 hours today. VNG will train personnel designated by the Town of Big Stone Gap on the operation and maintenance of the bladders and the pumps. Operation of the bladders will commence no later than Midnight, Tuesday, October 11, 2005. This activity is to continue 2-3 months.
- Provide 2 tractor trailers to transfer bottled water from Abingdon to the Big Stone Gap Armory. Teams will prepare to conduct 2 trips per day delivering approximately 9,200 gallons of bottled water. This activity is scheduled to commence on October 12, 2005 and continue until October 31, 2005.
- Dispense 11,000 gallons of bottled water to and at 5 distribution sites designated by local authorities. This activity is scheduled to commence on October 12, 2005 and continue until October 31, 2005.

Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC)

The VDOC has personnel and equipment on stand-by to assist with water distribution and other commodities, if necessary. DOC has a tanker that is available to haul water. Wallen's Ridge State Prison is entirely off the Big Stone Gap water supply, and is currently bringing in 90,000 gallons of water per day, with an average use of 35-40,000 gallons per day on non-shower days and 60,000 on shower days. Inmates are issued disposable washcloths for hand-washing and bottled water is being distributed.

State Fire Marshall's Office

Advising local authorities on jurisdictional concerns and technical alternatives. On-site representation scheduled for October 11, 2005.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Issued temporary permit for water withdrawal out of Powell River not to exceed 1 Million gallons per day on Friday, October 7, 2005.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

VDOT deployed 2 portable message boards on Friday evening, October 7 to support the on-going public information effort.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

The Town of Big Stone Gap implemented mandatory water conservation measures on September 27. These conservation measures require businesses to reduce water consumption by 50% and residences by 25%. Businesses were also required to submit a water conservation plan of action to town officials. The Town of Big Stone Gap is monitoring and spot-checking water meters to ensure compliancy with conservation measures. Wise County and Big Stone Gap are seeking alternative water sources. The City of Norton is now working on the Norton-Big Stone Gap temporary service line intended to pump water over the mountain from Norton to Big Stone Gap. If pressure, water testing, and sanitation results are good, water may be available Tuesday or Wednesday, October 11 or October 12. The Town of Big Stone Gap has authorized the purchase of 2 truckloads of bottled water providing 9,200 gallons of water. The suitability of a 100,000-gallon per day well near The Town of Big Stone Gap's pumping station is under investigation. The Town of Big Stone Gap has also leased a portable water processing plant to produce potable water from the Powell River. Arrival of filters is delaying this effort, but the plant is expected to be in use by Saturday, October 15, 2005. A second plant is on order with delivery expected before October 20, 2005.

Daily meetings are being conducted at Wise County Health Department with local/state agencies. Local/state representation is increasing and is expected to include Department of Social Services, Ministerial Association, Sheriff's Department, Mountain Empire Older Citizens Agency, and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Critical issues to be addressed include sheltering; particularly of special needs populations, establishing a public help-line and developing messages, and water distribution.

Impacted in addition to businesses and residences of Big Stone Gap are: Wellmont Lonesome Pine Hospital, Wallen's Ridge State Prison, Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Offices (DMME), Mountain Empire Community College, Powell Valley Primary, Middle and High Schools, Heritage Hall Nursing Home, 20 food facilities, two motels and a campground.

Mountain Empire Community College and DMME are expected to be the first areas without water by Thursday, October 13, followed secondly by Big Stone Gap Heights Subdivision and neighboring subdivisions and an apartment complex. On October 10, 2005 Mountain Empire Community College, which was projected to lose water supply on October 13, 2005, disconnected from the public water system and began utilizing portable restroom facilities. Mountain Empire Community College will host the annual Fall Festival during the weekend period beginning October 15. Portable restroom facilities and hand-washing stations or hand sanitizers will be utilized for the event. The availability of an on-site well is being investigated.

Heritage Hall Nursing Home is utilizing portable restroom facilities for its staff and will deploy 5-gallon water coolers for resident use to reduce consumption. Laundry is being sent out of the area.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VVOAD)

VAVOAD is working with the faith-based community and civic organizations to identify available resources and collection points within the faith-based community. VAVOAD will send list of available resources and coordinate with the VEOC for distribution of available commodities. VAVOAD is also working with Health and Human Services and VEOC to identify special needs.

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